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Huldra

Information

Patron for

Livestock, feasts, lust, wealth, spinning and weaving

Worshiped by

Nordlings

Religion center

Creyden, Vespaden

Trivia

Based on

Holda, Befana, Perchta, Hulder

Huldra is a robust Nordling goddess known in different regions of the Continent as **Perchta** or **Befana**. She is depicted with a cow tail and worshipped as the protector of livestock, patron of fertility, feasts, and wealth.

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History

The following is based on *The Witcher Thursdays* and may contradict Andrzej Sapkowski's works or R. Talsorian Games' official *The Witcher Role-Playing Game* line.
In the 1210s, during the tumultuous time following the Defenestration of Hengfors, the archpriestess of Temple of Melitele in Hengfors died in result of a curse casted by a priestesses of Huldra. Ghosts of the former archpriestess and her acolytes troubled the temple for some time, spoiling the temple's aura and disrupting the rituals.[1]

End of *The Witcher Thursdays* content.
At one point of his life, prior the first meeting with Yennefer of Vengerberg, Geralt of Rivia learnt an "exorcism" from a priestess of Huldra, although its meaning turned out to be just a vulgar joke.[2]

Cult

Huldra is most popular in the north, especially in Creyden and Vespaden.[3] In some cities, such as Hengfors, she is worshipped together with other Nordling deities, such as Melitele or Telawel.[1] Huldra's clergy knows temple language, as well as a number of exorcisms[2] and curses.[1]

Her temples are usually similar to elegant inns or massage parlours, when one can find comfortable sofas, soft pillows and best drinks. Monuments depicting the goddess are rarely seen since her priestesses often look divine themselves, with acolytes consisting of beautiful maidens among whom half-elves can be sometimes found. During important holidays, ceremonial feasts are hosted at the goddess' temples and shrines. As Huldra is, among others, a patron of lust and fertility, petitioners often ask her priestesses for tips on how to seduce a crush, obtain lovage or medication used to treat erectile dysfunction, or expand their knowledge in the arcana of love. Such services require an offering however, often in form of gold or gems.[3]

Notes

- Huldra, "the Cow-Tailed Goddess", is described in an article about Barefield written by one of 2nd Edition of *Wiedźmin: Gra Wyobraźni* authors, but it is unknown whether this was intended as a part of the final lorebook. According to the article, she is worshipped by Barefielders during Birke (known there as the "Calving Day") when young lambs and calves are offered her in a burnt sacrifice.
    The cow tail as the goddess' attribute was later mentioned in The Witcher Thursdays.

- In the short story, only name "Huldra" is mentioned.
  - In the published materials for *Gra Wyobraźni* second edition, the name has been misspelled as "Hludra".
  - *The Religion in Hengfors* material for *The Witcher* Thursdays mentions "Perchta" and "Befana" as the names under which the goddess is venerated in "different regions of the Continent", but doesn't specify which regions are those.
- In the Czech edition of the short stories, her name has been translated as "Guldra".

Trivia

- *Huldra* is Polish for Hulder, a seductive forest being with tail which name means *covered* or *secret*. Some scholars speculated that they were originally thought of as demons and only after rise of the Christianity their portrayal mixed with this of elves, leaving only tails.
- Holda, Mother Hulda, or Frau Holle, is a north European legendary figure believed to be a remnant of ancient Germanic goddess who taught humans the craft of making linen from flax. She was the goddess to whom souls of children who died in infancy went, and the overseer of taboos related to spinning and weaving.
- Perchta is a south European equivalent of Holda. In Bavaria, her followers used to leave her offerings of food and drink in the hope of receiving wealth and abundance.
- Befana is Italian folkloric being who delivers gifts to children on Epiphany Eve.

References